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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application No. : To Be Assigned
Applicant(s) : Tsunetoshi NMN Miura
Filed : June 25, 2003
Title : Absorbent Article Having a Graphic Visible Through Body
Contacting Surface
TC/A.U. : To Be Assigned
Examiner : To Be Assigned
Conf. No. : To Be Assigned
Docket No. : AA597

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT UNDER 37 CFR §1.115

Mail Stop Patent Application

Commissioner for Patents

P. O. Box 1450

Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Please amend the above-identified application as follows and consider the following remarks.

Amendments to the Specification begin on page 2 of this paper.

Amendments to the Claims begin on page 3 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 6 of this paper.

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the abstract as follows:

Please replace the abstract with the following rewritten paragraph:

ABSTRACT

~~The invention is directed to a~~ An absorbent article which includes ~~is preferably a sanitary napkin or a pantiliner, comprising:~~ a body contacting layer; a garment contacting layer; and an absorbent core disposed between the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer. The absorbent core has a core edge defining. ~~The core edge defines a core region within the core edge and an outer region outside the core region. The body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer extend outward into the outer region and are joined together in the outer region. In one aspect of the invention, the garment contacting layer has a graphic printed on the body facing surface at least in a portion of the outer region. In another aspect of the invention, the body contacting layer has a graphic printed on the garment facing surface at least in a portion of the outer region. The body contacting layer has a first light transmittance so that the graphic can be seen through the body contacting layer in the outer region. Since users (or women) can see the graphic through the body contacting layer, the absorbent article can provide an emotional benefit to women before uses, and thus decrease women's melancholic mood.~~

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 14, lines 32 to page 15, line 5, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In a preferred embodiment, in particular for a thicker sanitary napkin, the body contacting layer 30 and the absorbent core 50 can be provided with embossed channels. The pattern of embossed channels typically include a continuous line(s) which can be straight and/or curved. The embossed channels can have any pattern known in the art. One preferred pattern of embossed channels is shown by the reference numbers 80 and 82 in Fig. 1. Other preferred embossed channels are disclosed in, for example, USP. No. 5,795,345 issued to Mizutani et al. on August 18, 1998; GB 2,354,449 issued on May 9, 2001; and WO 96/07674 95/07674 issued on March 23, 1995.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. *(Currently amended)* An absorbent article, comprising:

- a body contacting layer;
- a garment contacting layer; and
- an absorbent core disposed between the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer, the absorbent core having a core edge;

- the core edge defining a core region within the core edge and an outer region outside the core region;

- the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer extending outward into the outer region and joined together in the outer region;

- the garment contacting layer having a graphic printed on the body facing surface at least in a portion of the outer region; and

- the body contacting layer having a first light transmittance so that the graphic printed on the body facing surface of the garment contacting layer can be seen through the body contacting layer in the outer region.

2. *(Currently amended)* An absorbent article, comprising:

- a body contacting layer;
- a garment contacting layer; and
- an absorbent core disposed between the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer, the absorbent core having a core edge;

- the core edge defining a core region within the core edge and an outer region outside the core region;

- the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer extending outward into the outer region and joined together in the outer region;

- the body contacting layer having a graphic printed on the garment facing surface at least in a portion of the outer region; and

- the body contacting layer having a first light transmittance so that the graphic printed on the garment facing surface of the body contacting layer can be seen through the body contacting layer in the outer region.

3. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the garment contacting layer has a second light transmittance so that the graphic on the body facing surface can be seen through the garment contacting layer.
4. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the first light transmittance is at least about 10%.
5. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 4 3, wherein the second light transmittance is at least about 10%.
6. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim ~~5~~ 3, wherein the difference between the first and second light transmittances is less than about 70%.
7. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim ~~5~~ 3, wherein the difference between the first and second light transmittances is greater than about 10%.
8. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the absorbent article has the Hunter Lab Total Color Difference between the outer region and the core region of about 0.5-73.
9. (*Original*) The absorbent article of the claim 2, wherein the body contacting layer includes a liquid permeable topsheet layer disposed in the core region, and a graphic protection layer disposed in the outer region,
 - the graphic protection layer has the graphic printed on the garment facing surface, and
 - the graphic protection layer has the first light transmittance so that the graphic printed on the garment facing surface of the graphic protection layer can be seen through the graphic protection layer in the outer region.
10. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the core edge of the absorbent core includes longitudinal side edges and lateral end edges, and the outer region is disposed outside the longitudinal side edges of the absorbent core.
11. (*Currently amended*) The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the core edge of the absorbent core includes longitudinal side edges and lateral end edges, and the outer region is disposed outside the lateral end edges of the absorbent core.

12. *(Currently amended)* The absorbent article of the claim 10, wherein the body contacting layer and the garment contacting layer extending outward into the outer region to form a flap (i.e., wing).

13. *(Original)* The absorbent article of the claim 1, wherein the body contacting layer includes a liquid permeable topsheet layer disposed in the core region, and a graphic protection layer disposed in the outer region.

14. *(Currently amended)* The absorbent article of the claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein the graphic protection layer has a hydrophobic nature to prevent body fluids discharged at the topsheet layer from wicking therethrough.

REMARKS

The abstract has been amended to be in proper form.

The specification has been amended on page 14 and 15 to correct the patent reference numbers so they corresponded to the subject and issued dates.

Claims 1 - 14 are pending in the present application. No additional claims fee is believed to be due.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to place in proper form.

Claims 3, 4, 8, 10, and 14 have been amended to be dependent on Claim 1. Support for this amendment is found in original Claim 1 and Claims 3, 4, 8, 10 and 14 respectively.

Claims 5, 6, and 7 have been amended to depend from Claim 3 so to have proper antecedent basis. Support for this amendment is found in original Claim 3 and Claims 5, 6, and 7 respectively.

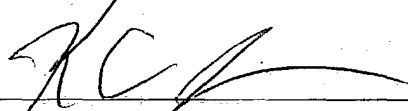
It is believed these changes do not involve any introduction of new matter. Consequently, entry of these changes is believed to be in order and is respectfully requested

Conclusion

Applicants have made an earnest effort to place their application in proper form. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request consideration of this application, entry of the amendments presented herein, and allowance of Claims 1-14.

Respectfully submitted,

By



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June 25, 2003

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